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Brothers Simon and Spencer of Kirkfield gave a thumbs up for the opportunity to share the seat of a 1923 Ford T-Bucket at the annual Rat Rod Ruckus and Classic car show in Norland. See more on pages 14 and 15. /KAREN LONDON Staff

AH reconsiders recreation committee makeup

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Times Staff

Algonquin Highlands has lost another recreation committee member.

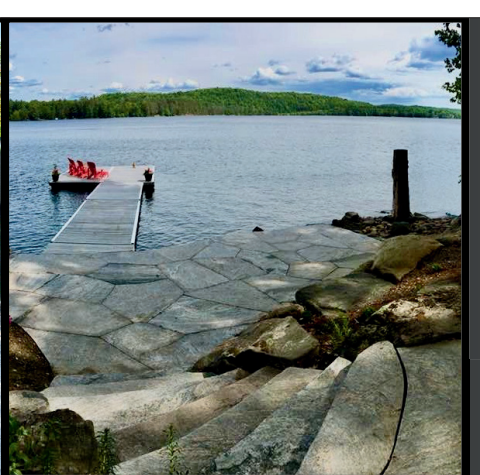
The township advertised its need for committee members but hasn't gotten any applications to date. Council heard during its Oct. 3 meeting that the committee is down to three members of the public and two from council with town staff.

"There's very few left," said Councillor Sabrina Richards. "Certainly not enough to carry the load of events, which is why the terms of reference discussion is coming up."

It's up to council as a whole what becomes of the Algonquin Highlands Recreation Committee, she said. But the remaining group members have some ideas on how they can handle the burden going forward.

She said one suggestion is council consider the possibility of scaling back the number

see COUNCIL page 2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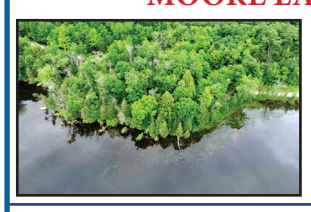
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Council looks at event-specific groups to replace committee

from page 1

of events the township hosts each year. The thinking is that members of the public would be more inclined to volunteer their time for less of a commitment.

Aside from community events that are planned and hosted by the committee members, the group also has monthly meetings that members need to attend.

Richards put out the possibility of opening volunteer opportunities to random members of the public to contribute to planning and hosting.

"Rather than have all the burden on a very tiny committee," Richards said.

"Obviously this needs a lot more fleshing out and discussion," Mayor Liz Danielsen said. "It's pretty hard to create a subcommittee when you've only got limited numbers. So it would be more like an ad hoc committee specific to that event."

"I like that, I really do," said Deputy Mayor Jennifer Dailloux. "I like the idea of potentially not having a broader committee at all, but rather having the opportunity for ad hoc volunteers to come on an event by event basis."

Dailloux said that would reduce the burden on committee members.

Committee members in Oxtongue Lake would like to focus on events in that part of the township. But they may be hesitant to drive all the way to Stanhope to contribute to events there.

"Do we wish that we could have more of a township-wide spirit for these sorts of events?" Dailloux said. "Absolutely, but I don't think that's where we're at right now."

"I still think that somehow there needs to be one primary committee to talk about, for instance, what programs we're going to have going forward as opposed to event-oriented (initiatives)," Danielsen said.

Ultimately, the mayor said she could see pros and cons with both setups.

"A lot of things still need to be discussed, which is why they'll be discussed at the next rec meeting," said Richards. "The rec committee would still be involved in assisting staff with programming and recommendations."

There are many volunteers in the community, Richards said. But they're thinly spread among different organizations.

"The more expectations you put on them for commitment of time, the fewer you receive," Richards said. "However, you may get a greater uptake if they focus on just one event."

"Or one program," Danielsen said.

Chris Card, the township's parks, recreation, and trails manager, said the suggested ideas have all been good.

"I think the committee as has been referenced is very short on people-power," he said. "They're not short on good ideas and they're not short on things that hit the mark as far as what the community wants."

He said he's seen how there's robust discussion on what the community wants and needs, but that effort stalls on who is going to do it.

"And then the discussion goes back to how are we going to get the volunteers?" he said and added that many Ontario municipalities are in the same predicament.

Danielsen said the township has to take a look at how it recruits volunteers and shows appreciation for them.

"I do like the idea that, for instance, now when we're recruiting for volunteers we're recruiting for committee membership which says so much more than recruiting for soccer or any specific event or activity," she said.

Council goes its own way for playground equipment

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Times Staff

Algonquin Highlands received one bid for work at the Oxtongue Lake Community Centre Green Space.

And council heard during its Sept. 3 meeting that the sole bid was over budget by about $10,000.

Council had set aside a budget of $28,850 and issued a request for proposals for the supply and installation of a swing set and accessible pathway at the community centre's green space. The pathway was added as a provisional item, based on available budget.

The bid blew the budget basically by the amount added for the pathway, which was $9,960 plus taxes. The offer included the swing set at a cost of $29,414 plus taxes for a total quote of $39,374 plus taxes.

That's $10,524 over budget.

Chris Card, the township's parks, recreation, and trails manager, said staff recommended council cancel the RFP and proceed by way of informal request for quotes. The suggestion is that staff reach out directly to playground companies for quotations for providing and installing the swing set in an attempt to bring the project to within approved budget.

Township staff can install the pathway.

"We do feel that would likely be the way to get us best value," he said.

Mayor Liz Danielsen said there are many companies who are in the business of supplying swing sets and playground equipment. But they may not be interested in developing a pathway.

"Because we're asking for two completely different types of work, if that's where we run into the problem," she said. "I do find this a little bit frustrating. It seems like it's been so long trying to just get a swing set in place.

"Oxtongue has been waiting quite a while and I know they're not particularly happy about this."

Deputy Mayor Jennifer Dailloux wondered if sourcing a swing set themselves would cost dramatically less than by way of an RFP.

> "Doing the shopping around does not guarantee we're going to find a better price. I'm fairly confident that we will, but it's not a guarantee."
>
> — CHRIS CARD, ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS

"The $28,000 for me sounds outrageous," she said. "I don't think I can stomach saying yes to that bid."

Dailloux and Councillor Sabrina Richards both agreed the avenue staff suggested is most favourable.

"It's unfortunate, but playground equipment because of insurance reasons is extremely expensive to purchase," Richards said.

"It's October now," said Coun. Julia Shortreed. "Nothing is going to happen. Nobody is going to use it all winter so if we can have it when the frost is out of the ground in the spring. We've got lots of time."

"As long as we're ready in the spring, that we're not talking about this next fall," Danielsen said.

"Doing the shopping around does not guarantee we're going to find a better price," Card said. "I'm fairly confident that we will, but it's not a guarantee."

The company that submitted the lone bid is a playgroup equipment supplier, he said.

On a journey towards Truth and Reconciliation

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

Larry O'Connor explains the eagle staff to an eager audience during his presentation at the Haliburton School of Art + Design on National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. The nationally-recognized day of reflection falls on Sept. 30 each year, and represents a day to listen, to learn, and to reflect on Indigenous history and culture across the country. /THOMAS SMITH Staff

On Monday, Sept. 30, Larry O'Connor was invited by the Haliburton School of Art + Design to share his personal journey as an Indigenous person, and to discuss colonialism and the history of the residential schools.

"My parents, Terry and Dolores O'Connor, they raised the ten of us kids down in Oshawa away from our culture. So I have been on a journey to rediscover my culture because while I wasn't raised in my culture, I was born Annishinaabe-Odawa. My home community is Sheshegwaning and I am from Bear Clan," opened O'Connor.

At the beginning of the presentation, the dean of the Haliburton School of Art + Design, Xavier Massé gifted O'Connor with tobacco.

"Tobacco was given to me as a gift. The first gift that was given to us Annishinaabe was the asemaa, the tobacco, from the creator," said O'Connor.

"When you present me with a gift of tobacco, it is a contract between you and I for me to share my knowledge in a good way, said O'Connor. "I have been on this journey as Xavier had mentioned. On this journey I had a vision, a dream. The dream came not that long ago, it came after meeting this eagle. This eagle was in a cardboard box across the street from me at my neighbour's house. It was carved over 30 years ago, about 1990 and it stayed in that box for a long time and moved from province to province as my neighbour moved."

"I saw that eagle and I told her that that eagle belongs on an eagle staff. It is beautiful. You know, it has a spirit," said O'Connor.

His neighbour is over 88 years old and refused to give him the eagle until she had painted it. It took her the entire winter to paint it.

On one side of the eagle staff, it depicts the Grandfather Teachings.

"Eagle staffs have a life. They have to be birthed and they have to be birthed in a ceremony. This eagle staff was birthed in Michipicoten. Michipicoten is on the shores of Lake Superior, near Wawa. It was birthed there. The eagle staff itself came from Haliburton. It is maple. It is a little heavy for an eagle staff, but I wanted it to recognise our first foods when we come out of the winter, our long winters. When we were struggling, lacking from vitamins, the maple tree was the first thing that gives us this water. The water that is full of minerals and vitamins and sustained us."

The grandfather teachings depicted on the eagle staff were gifted to O'Connor from the children at Fenelon Falls Public School.

"Truth and reconciliation is a journey. It is a long journey. It is a teaching staff. Most staff are carried by veterans. All eagle staff are different."

Larry says that in moments of celebrations such as plentiful hunting seasons, that is when the eagle staff would be brought out.

"The eagle staffs have a spirit and I am so fortunate to be able to be an ogichidaa- a warrior, a carrier of this eagle staff."

"When I went looking for my history, I went looking and the first thing I found was my ancestors that served in the wars. More Indigenous men responded to that call for action during the First World War before Canada even responded to that call."

"The orange T-shirt that we wear today, that we recognize for Truth and Reconciliation. It represents not life sometimes, because so many lives were lost, but they are not to be forgotten. This here, really is a sign of remembering. Let's not forget. We need to remember those that went through the residential school systems. There is not an Indigenous person on Turtle Island that hasn't been impacted by the residential schools. Our ancestors, or family members went there, some came home, some didn't. When I went looking for my ancestors at Shingwuak, where the residential school was in Sault Ste. Marie through the archives, I found my great grandmother. I found one of my great aunties. Beside her name, some of the comments were 'they were wholly untaught,' 'didn't speak English'. Well we didn't, we spoke our own language. Melissa, the comment beside her was, 'she died.'

"I don't know if she died at school, leaving school, or not. But she died."

"They say the numbers can be as high as 69 per cent of people who went to residential schools, didn't survive. The graduation rate of children that went to the residential schools was about seven or eight per cent."

"If they spoke their language, they were punished," said O'Connor.

On the other side of the eagle staff, a red dress represents the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The 13 eagle feathers represent the 13 moons in the year. The bottom feather is turned up as a way of knowing that the Creator is there and will catch us, says O'Connor. The red on the banner of the eagle staff represents the bloodshed throughout history and through those that came to his ancestor's land. The white represents innocence. The banner is held by an antler of an elk, representing the nurturing that hooved animals provide. A medicine wheel is present, depicting all the different nations and races represented by the four different colours. The bear represents O'Connor's connection to Bear Clan.

"This eagle staff was created as a way to teach, to share," said O'Connor.

"Earlier this year on the news I had heard that they had found one of them in a landfill," said O'Connor.

"I was in the rotunda of the Manitoba legislature," said O'Connor. "I was there for a ceremony for the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and there were so many family members there. So many. They were looking for answers and they are not finding them."

"If it wasn't for the treaty, you folks would all be trespassing. But you're not trespassing because we knew that this land was plentiful, we knew that we can share, we knew that there is room for all of us here."

"Reconciliation. We need to act," said O'Connor.

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COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and electronic participation in accordance with the Municipal Act. Meetings begin at 9:00 am unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

- **October 10 – Regular Council Meeting**
- **October 31 – Regular Council Meeting**

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link on the Township CivicWeb Portal at https://mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx. Visit our website for more information.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We are currently seeking energetic and highly motivated individuals for the following positions:

- Permit Clerk
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MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

MINDEN HILLS Cultural Centre

The Minden Hills Museum, Heritage Village and Nature's Place are open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm until October 12. Join us for Wildlife Crafts on Thursdays from 3-4 pm, Toddler Discovery Zone on Fridays from 11 am – noon and Hands-On Saturdays from 10 am – noon. Self-guided tours of the Heritage Village are available daily. Admission is by donation.

- Join local artists Gary Blundell, Victoria Ward and Orillia-based filmmaker Jordan Vandenberg at the Agnes Jamieson Gallery on Saturday, October 19 at 2 pm for the screening of two documentaries: Burner Herzog and Cobalt Blooms. The screening will be followed by a Q & A with the filmmaker and artists. Admission is by donation.

For more information on all the programs and exhibits email culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS MUNICIPAL OFFICE & FACILITIES CLOSED THANKSGIVING DAY

The Township of Minden Hills Municipal Office (7 Milne St.), the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena & Complex (55 Parkside St.) and the Minden Hills Cultural Centre (176 Bobcaygeon Rd.) will be closed on Monday, October 14, 2024 for Thanksgiving. Our offices and facilities will resume regular hours on Tuesday, October 15, 2024.
Township of Minden Hills
PO Box 359, 7 Milne St., Minden, ON K0M 2K0
Tel: 705-286-1260, admin@mindenhills.ca

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

It's time to check your home heating system. Regularly replace furnace filters - keep all areas around the furnace and vent pipe clean and unobstructed. Make sure you clean your chimney before you start your wood burning appliance and store hot ashes in a fire safe container.

CONFIDENTIAL PAPER SHREDDING EVENT

Back by popular demand! The Township is hosting another confidential paper shredding event Saturday, October 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Scotch Line Landfill. Please bring a food or toiletry donation to be donated to the local Minden Community Food Centre.

AVAILABLE TENDER

The Township of Minden Hills currently has the following tender available: **PW 24-002 - Tag-A-long Float Trailer**
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NO DAYTIME BURNING

No daytime burning. From April 1st to October 31st in any year is considered fire season. Fire restrictions are from 7:00 A.M. till 7:00 P.M. No person shall start a fire outdoors during the restricted time in fire season.

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David Pate literary arts roundtable

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

David Pate, centre, poses with Fay Martin, centre left, with fellow graduates from the University of King's College MFA program. /Submitted

On Thursday, Oct. 10 at 5 p.m., a literary arts roundtable will be taking place at the Dominion Hotel in Minden. The event is hosted by the Arts Council~Haliburton Highlands and is co-sponsored by the University of King's College. The literary arts roundtable is in celebration and to launch David Pate's new book *The Worst Songs in the World-The Terrible Truth about National Anthems*. During the roundtable, Fay Martin will be reading excerpts from his book. Helga Rausch will also be reading excerpts from her manuscript of her book *Leaders All: Women in the Canadian Armed Forces 1950 to the Present.*

Martin met Pate while completing her MFA in Creative Writing at the University of King's College online during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, Pate peacefully passed away in his sleep at the age of 64.

"Five of us shared a mentor for three of the four MFA semesters. We decided early on to ZOOM for an hour weekly and became close friends," said Martin. "We bullied the school into making the second semester residential actually residential (we were students during COVID-19) so we five could meet in person from literally across the country. Those of us still alive still connect regularly."

After the sudden passing of Pate, the University of King's College asked Pate's classmates if they would be willing to assist in launching his book and getting it into the hands of readers.

"It's my honour to make David's work known to the larger world," said Martin. "He was such a smart guy, astonishing researcher, irrepressible humour with a political bent – and I mean bent as in seeing the world through a highly intellectual and analytical prism."

"Pate, a long term CBC radio host in Halifax applied his slightly bent research skills and acerbic wit to make the subject sing," said Martin.

"Singing together is useful, perhaps even necessary, to make a disparate population feelunified and focused on a common goal. Pate wishes this power might be reflected in less gory and divisive lyrics, but he finds some heart-warming examples of bad words being put to good use," said Martin.

He could take a topic that could be considered dry and "bring it to life," said Helga Rausch, another classmate of Pate's.

"[Writing] can be a very solitary pursuit," said Rausch. Rausch is excited for the event to allow aspiring writers to come out to the event to listen to readings from the books, ask questions, and to facilitate growing a sense of literary citizenship in the Haliburton Highlands.

"Even if you look no farther than your newspapers, there is a treasure trove of writers here, and I just wonder if there's some way we want to combine our knowledge, our complaints, our courage to keep on keepin' on, maybe even improving…"

"University of King's College offered a small grant to support the launches and I wanted a local partner and maybe it was overdue time for me to get involved with the Arts Council as a writer (I hung out with them during the theatre days) so I approached them and they embraced the opportunity."

Rausch will also be reading excerpts from her upcoming book *Leaders All: Women in the Canadian Armed Forces 1950 to the Present*. Helga is a veteran and served in the military for 38 years including deployment to Operation IMPACT in Iraq and later, Kuwait. Rausch retired from the Canadian military in September of 2020.

Leaders All: Women in the Canadian Armed Forces 1950 to the Present utilizes Rausch's first hand experience in being the third class of women to graduate from the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario.

"This book is a history of the women at the Royal Military College, a history that I know a little bit about, having gone through it," said Rausch.

Her book covers the patchy history of women serving in the Canadian military with an emphasis on notable women like Sheila A. Hellstrom and Jennie Carignan. It begins with women serving in the Korean War, up to Lt-Gen. Jennie Carignan becoming the first ever female Chief of Defense.

The Literary Arts Roundtable event is free to attend. While not mandatory, it is highly recommended to sign up for the event through Eventbrite for organizers to know the number of people planning to attend this event. Registration for this event can be done through the Eventbrite page here: www.eventbrite.ca/e/literary-arts-roundtable-lar-tickets-1012203276247

Copies of *The Worst Songs in the World-The Terrible Truth about National Anthems* will be available to purchase at this event. Following the readings, a question and answer period will follow for anyone interested in learning on tips to write, how to get their writing published, and how to navigate marketing yourself as a writing professional.

HERE FOR YOU IN THE HIGHLANDS

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To the businesses and service organizations who have supported the Here for You campaign with gifts of $5,000 or more, thank you for illustrating your commitment to making Haliburton County a better place to live, work and play.

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Council gets cozier to public with refreshed comms plan

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Times Staff

Algonquin Highlands residents will soon have another digital means to keep informed about their township council.

Chad Ingram, the township's communications coordinator, described to council some of the updates to be reflected in the municipal corporate communications plan.

The current plan was approved in 2022 and updating it was one of the strategic actions that came out of the Corporate Strategic Plan 2024-2028.

The plan's purpose is to provide a guiding document that will act as the blueprint for all township communication activities internally, inter-municipally, and externally.

It is intended to identify and develop communications procedures, policies, partnerships, and strategies to be used by the township on an ongoing basis. The plan aims to make township communications as timely, effective, concise, and consistent as possible.

It will ensure avenues of communication are meeting the needs of a changing community. It applies to the township's printed and electronic communications and, to some extent, verbal communications as well.

Its recommendations pertain to township staff at all levels and, in some cases, to councillors.

Ingram, a former writer at the Minden Times, said most of the changes from the update stems from the municipality's strategic plan. At the top is the possible introduction of a monthly digital newsletter to complement the hard copy newsletter and other printed news and notices.

"It will be long form two- to three-page newsletter," he said. "The focus would be very topical. So the focus would be whatever happens in this room.

"It would largely be about council decisions and where they're at and discussions."

Basically, it will be a "miniature newspaper" that will be distributed by way of every digital means the township maintains, Ingram said.

"So it would include things like if we're going to be doing major road work at a certain area, then people would know about that," Mayor Liz Danielsen said.

"Council's discussing the creation of X and Y bylaws, road construction, and all these types of things," he said. "It'll be in one place and we'll do it the same time every month."

He said it will be modelled after the similar efforts of other Ontario municipalities.

Another way to improve public reach will be a permanent question and answer portal on the township's website.

"This is in the spirit of increasing two-way communication with residents," he said.

Danielsen said she felt Ingram's additions were good ideas.

As part of the process to update the plan, a public survey was available on the Let's Connect Algonquin Highlands website and promoted throughout July. Ingram said in a report to council that, while public uptake on the survey was not overwhelmingly high, staff are confident it provides an accurate snapshot of resident sentiment toward evolving communications practices.

Deputy Mayor Jennifer Dailloux said Ingram's ideas speak well to some of the feedback received in the survey.

"I think we've got a ground truth how we reach people and reality is it's about giving them things they're going to find interesting and engaging and that comes to them rather than expecting them to sign up for News and Notices or whatever it might be, which people just aren't going to do," she said. "That's not how they function."

"It still takes some effort on their (the public's) part to go there," Danielsen said.

"It does," Dailloux said. "But not to the degree that they need to log into our agenda every month to find out is there anything on the agenda that is relevant to them."

Dailloux asked what the criteria will be to determine what information would be included on the expanded web presence.

"This particular function, question and answer, is meant to be what it is," Ingram said. "The question is coming from residents themselves, but we could create a sort of playbook, if you will, type of thing that has sort of strategic answers for various subjects."

"Let's see what kind of response we get from the Q and A," Danielsen said. "Let them provide the questions. If we see that that's not working or we're not getting what we see as strategic messages out, it's something that can evolve."

"The discussion in this room sets the content, really," Ingram said.

"In your newsletter that you talked about," Danielsen said.

Angie Bird, the township's CAO, said other messaging should be vetted by council before it is communicated to the public.

"Because I wouldn't want the committees of council to be able to go directly to the communications coordinator and say we want you to put this out," Bird said.

Ingram ran with something else Dailloux said: "You said the words there, Did You Know," he said. "We can make that sort of a standing section. Here's some interesting, useful tidbits that you (the public) probably aren't aware of. Things the township does that (they) may not know the township takes care of or the way asset management plans affect budgeting."

Dailloux suggested communications items be a standing item for council meeting agendas.

Councillor Lisa Barry, who is on the environment and stewardship committee, suggested one environmental fact be presented each month.

Coun. Sabrina Richards agreed that communications items should be regularly discussed around the council chamber during each meeting.

"Recently I saw highlights of our last council meeting," Richards said. "I thought that was fantastic. It's getting it out there before others get it out there in a way that, you know, makes sure that it's properly put out there."

InOtherWords

Columns and Letters to the Editor

The Times

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Minden, ON, K0M 2K0
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Published by White Pine Media Corp

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News Media Canada / Médias d'Info Canada
CMCA AUDITED

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Letters to the Editor must be signed and include phone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Email must include name and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Print Subscriptions 1 yr/ $51 (taxes included). Published each Wednesday by White Pine Media
To Subscribe to the Print or Digital edition, email subscriptions@haliburtonpress.com or call (705) 286-1288.

Fall bear week

IT IS THE most exciting time of the year. No, it is not Thanksgiving yet, it is Fat Bear Week.

Fat Bear Week was first started online in 2015. It is an annual event held by the Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska. The competition is organized in collaboration by explore.org and the National Parks Commission.

From the comfort of my computer, I can watch a grizzly bear tear apart a salmon.

Ahh, the beauty of nature.

Fat Bear Week initially began as Fat Bear Tuesday by park ranger Mike Fitz after he noticed the increasing interest in watching the live streams of the bears feeding on salmon in the river.

THOMAS SMITH
Editor

Bears are tracked from the beginning of spring to the fall. The bears are feasting on salmon to satisfy their hunger while preparing for their winter hibernation. The survival of the bears over winter is entirely dependent on their fat reserves before entering their den at the start of winter.

Photos are taken of the bears and participants are asked to vote on 'the fattest bear of the year'. After choosing your favourite bears and making a bracket, participants are asked to donate to the Otis Fund which provides support to Katmai National Park and Preserve. All funds donated will be matched by explore.org.

Personally, I am saying that Bear No. 141 named Walker should win this competition. His rolls are thickest and in my unprofessional opinion shows the greatest difference between his spring and fall photo.

Fat Bear Week is a reminder of the beautiful diversity that nature offers to us. These live streams are windows to untamed wilderness with a plethora of fish, the healthiest stocks of salmon left on our planet.

I wanted to talk about Fat Bear Week to remind you that Minden is bear country. Bears in the Minden area are also feeling the hunger just as the bears in Katmai National Park are. During this time of intensified feeding, bears will be attracted to garbage, leftover fruit from fruit trees, and other food sources in town.

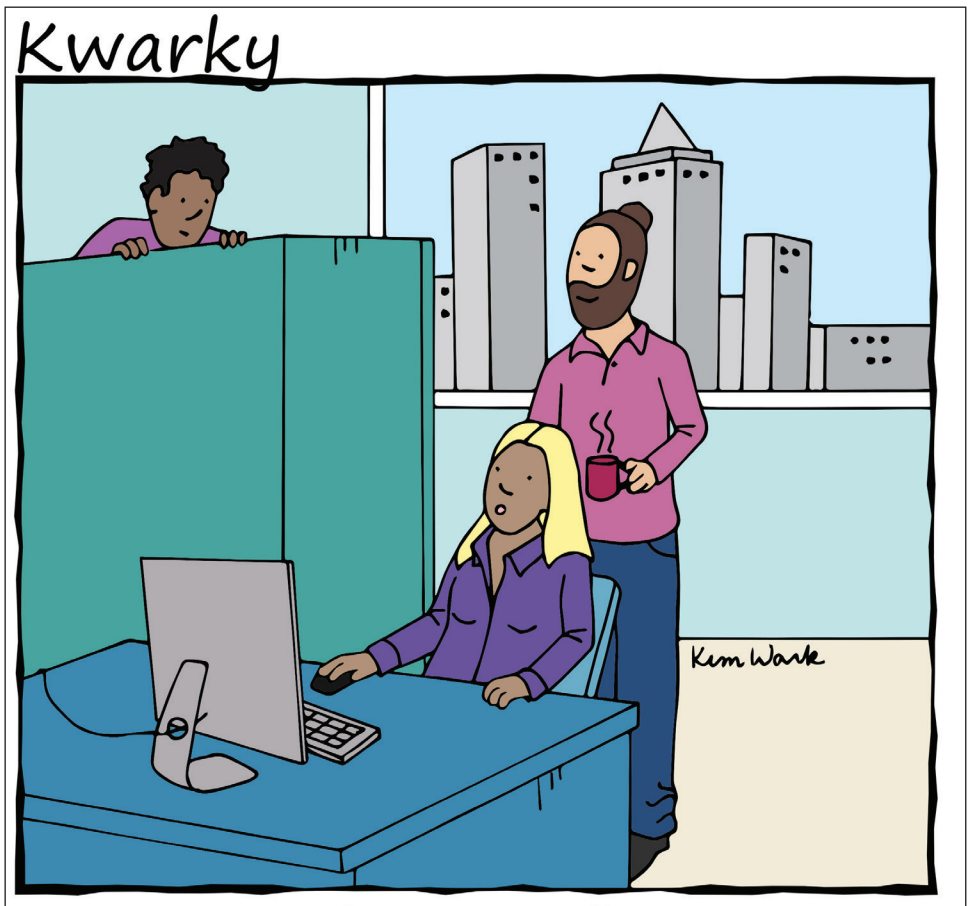
Bears love garbage.

It is a sad truth in our society that bears have become adapted to the production of food, of food waste, and oftentimes become dependent on humans. Every time I go to the Scotch Line Landfill, I hope that I do not see a bear there. I hope that it is still able to find the food and resources necessary to survive the winter within our beautiful landscape of the Haliburton Highlands.

Careful management of your garbage and food waste can reduce the desire of bears to your property. The less bears are desired to visit human settlements, the less number of bears will be shot in defense and due to their comfortability amongst humans. Meat scraps and food waste should be frozen and taken to the landfill as soon as you are able to.

In a non-emergency situation, the Bear Wise Reporting Line in Ontario can be contacted at 1-866-514-2327.

Call 911 if you think a bear is stalking someone or you are being stalked, a bear has entered a home or cottage, and if a bear has killed your pets or livestock and is still lingering around the site.



"I had to come back to the office. I can't work that close to my fridge."

Don't ask don't tell

SOME TIME ago, the American military adapted a don't ask, don't tell policy. I never learned much about the details of that, but I assume it was referring to trout fishing and grouse hunting spots. For those two commands sum up how you should approach either one.

If you suspect someone has a good spot for either activity – don't ask. If you are the one with the good spot – don't tell.

Here's why. When you ask someone to direct you to their secret hunting or fishing spot, you are putting that person in the extremely awkward position of possibly having to say no to someone they – up until that point – considered a friend.

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

On the other hand, if they do tell you, it means they are telling someone who has no respect for the sanctity of a secret hunting or fishing spot. This means you cannot be trusted and will, despite promising otherwise, probably also tell someone else, who will soon tell someone else, and so on. Then, the next time either of you visit that spot, you will meet 10 to 12 people who are all separated from Kevin Bacon by one less degree. Eventually, Kevin Bacon will know about the place too.

On the other hand, if you steadfastly say no when someone asks where your secret grouse or trout fishing spot is, they will be a little perturbed that you don't think they are trustworthy enough to keep a confidence. And, if that person happens to be your spouse, they will insist you go to couples counselling to deal with trust issues – which will mean that sooner or later the counsellor will know about it too.

It's really a no-win situation.

The best way to deal with this sort of predicament is to do the dignified thing – curl up in the fetal position and cover your ears whenever asked. Or simply never let on to anyone that you fish for trout or hunt for grouse in the first place – which is an easy thing to do until you make a great shot or catch a big fish.

Another viable option is to lie through your teeth and utilize deceptive measures that would make a CIA operative blush. I knew one fellow who, at the end of an outing, would routinely clean his grouse hunting spot like he was trying to scrub a crime scene. He would go so far as to pluck the birds he shot a mile or two down the road and even leave a shell casing or two there to throw other hunters off the scent.

But that only delayed the inevitable.

One time he was at his good spot, parked by the side of the road after a particularly successful hunt. That's when a car with two grouse hunters approached. Luckily, he had already got out of his hunting clothes and put his gun away.

Nevertheless, the vehicle stopped, and the driver rolled down the window and asked, "How is the grouse hunting?"

"I'm not grouse hunting," he lied.

"Are you sure?" the driver asked.

"Yes sir," he replied.

"OK," the driver answered, "but before you drive off, don't forget to put those grouse on the roof of your car in the trunk."

The fellow nodded sheepishly and then replied, "Hey, aren't you Kevin Bacon?"

InOtherWords

Columns and Letters to the Editor

A winter strategy

I WAS EXPLORING an unfamiliar town on foot, as is my wont, making up stories to explain to myself what I saw, and had gotten into the industrial entrails. Out of the pedestrian and pragmatic landscape appeared a beautifully designed building, deep-sea blue, large, with graciously curving roof lines. I squinted to make out the name: Inuit Cultural something something. Huh? I'd have come closer, in spite of the Keep Out signs in three languages, but there were a couple guys sluicing out a dilapidated truck, so I asked another guy leaning over the fence taking a smoke break what it was. 'Jail' he said.

It brought to mind a short story by O. Henry that was in my high school English Literature text. I love O. Henry's super extravagant use of language and ironic approach to reality, and I have a book of his short stories, published 1979, so old it makes me sneeze when I open it. There it is: *The Cop and the Anthem.*

Soapy lives quite happily in an unhoused manner until the chill of autumn creeps through his newspaper duvet and his mind turns to a winter strategy. His favourite option is what acquaintances of mine who have experience affectionately call 'three hots and a cot': the slammer. He considers 'the Law… more benign than Philanthropy [where] if not in coin you must pay in humiliation of spirit for every benefit received … Wherefore it is better to be a guest of the law, which, though conducted by rules, does not meddle unduly with a gentleman's private affairs.'

Soapy's first attempt to snare an appearance before a kindly Magistrate is to get seated in a 'glittering café, where are gathered nightly the choicest products of the grape, the silkworm and the protoplasm' and do what my acquaintances with experience would call an E and R – an eat and run. In Soapy's case, having declared penury, he'd wait patiently for the cops. The top half of him might pass muster, but his frayed pants and decadent shoes deny him entrance.

FAY MARTIN

Poke, Peel, Pair, Ponder

He enjoys a more modest meal at a less pretentious place, but instead of calling the cops, they unceremoniously throw him out.

He sidles up to a 'young woman of a modest and pleasing guise' window-shopping within ear-shot of a 'large policemen of severe demeanor' and proposes inappropriate and probably illegal activity; she hooks her arm in his and proposes that, to start, he 'blow her to a pail of suds'.

Soapy shakes her off and rushes to the entertainment district, where in front of a 'transplendent theatre' and a lounging policeman he commences 'to yell drunken jibberish at the top of his harsh voice. He danced, howled, raved and otherwise disturbed the welkin'. To no effect: the cop dismisses him as a Yalie celebrating a sports win.

He brazenly steals an umbrella left temporarily outside a cigar shop and dares the owner to charge him, only to find the owner begging forgiveness, as he had himself just picked up the umbrella in a restaurant, perhaps in error.

Despondent, and with Jack Frost nipping at his run-down heels, Soapy heads back to his home park bench but stops to admire organ music emanating from a quaint old church. The majestic music moves him to reconsider his life choices and to resolve to take a higher path.

But along comes a policeman. 'What are you doin' here?'

'Nothin', says Soapy.

'Come along' says the policeman.

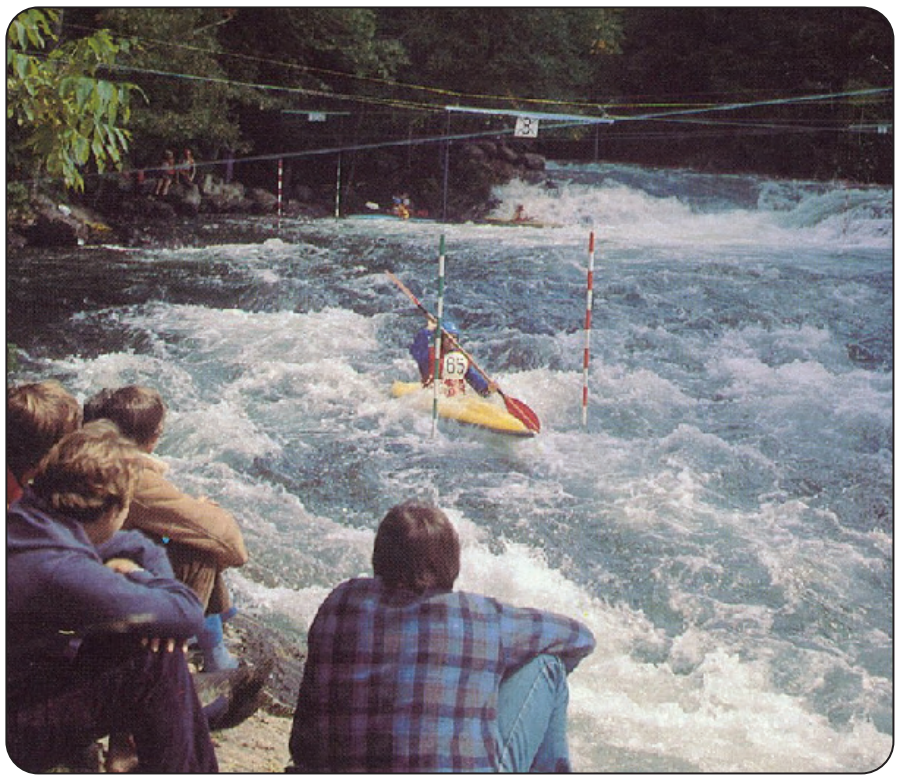
'Three months' says the Magistrate the next morning.

The Arctic town I was exploring has a very high rate of homelessness and very cold winters. The shelters are plugged because there is no place to move on to. The town is built on piles and I was told the common practice of sleeping underneath buildings protected people from the punishing wind, but was no guarantee of avoiding freezing to death. The beautiful blue building seemed a much preferable alternative.

I was told the police did take the homeless into custody to save them from freezing. I asked whether an 80-rooms-or-thereabouts military barrack in the industrial wastelands, not beautiful but serviceable, looking and said to be usually vacant, could be put to better use. Negotiation had been attempted but came to naught – sorta like Soapy's unresponsive cops. I suggested picking the locks. My listeners suggested that might get me three hots and a cot. I was tempted – I've been in jail once (just two hots and I never used the cot) and it wasn't so bad.

On my way back from my exploratory trek, the work men were gone and I ventured closer. The sign read Inuit Cultural Skills Project. Soapy's skills, I wondered?

Minden Memories



A slalom race on the Gull River. Slalom is a form of kayaking involves navigating gates quickly on a river course, with time penalties added for missed gates. The Minden White course has hosted multiple competitions from the 1981 Canadian National Slalom Championships (pictured) to the 2015 Pan-Am Games. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

Visit Dorset for arts and crafts

The Dorset Arts and Crafts Show takes place Saturday, Oct. 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Dorset Recreation Centre and will feature local artisans selling a variety of items. There will be pottery; wood working pieces; images from Muskoka, Haliburton and Algonquin; oil, acrylic and watercolour paintings; quilting; folk art; rugs; candles; diffusers; fused glass ornaments; pendants; and much more! Come and see us in the gymnasium and support the local artisans. There will be sandwiches and pie available to purchase for lunch.

For more information, call 705-766-9968 or email recreation@algonquinhighlands.ca

Submitted

HCPL's Book of the Week

Aleeza Kassam, a lonely freshman and aspiring journalist, is drawn to the mystery of Jay Hoque, a student who vanished from her dorm five months ago. When Jay begins texting her from the past, Aleeza and Jay work together across time to prevent his disappearance, risking a potential temporal paradox. As she investigates Jay's life and relationships, Aleeza finds herself falling for her elusive, time-crossed roommate.

Remember Me Tomorrow by Farah Heron is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library.

Water Festival inspires kids to become water stewards

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

The Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha (HMK) Water Festival is an annual event that is put on by the Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning in partnership with U-Links Centre for Community Based Research and the Kinark Outdoor Centre. The 19th Water Festival was held on Oct. 1 and 2 this past week to students in Grades 4 through 6 from across the Trillium Lakelands District School Board and the local homeschooling communities.

The Water Festival is a daycamp all about the celebration of water. Kids learn about the science of water, the water cycle, and its importance to life on Earth.

"We teach children how to be water stewards," says Kara Mitchell, coordinator of the HMK Children's Water Festival. "Activity centres allow the kids to soak in learning through hands-on opportunities."

For this year's Water Festival, over 100 volunteers came out, and they had 12 presenters from nearby conservation authorities, (TRent Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Science), Algonquin Highlands and Haliburton Fire crews, the Turtle Guardians, and many others. With over 700 students visiting the Water Festival, Mitchell says that they are finally meeting their pre COVID-19 numbers.

"It's essential for us to have local community volunteers as well," said Mitchell. "We are mostly made of water and we are dependent on water as it is a life giving element."

"Our health is dependent on the water supply for drinking, growing our food, as well as the health of the ecosystem."

Canada is lucky with more freshwater resources than many other countries. The Haliburton Highlands are also lucky with our plethora of lakes, said Mitchell.

Kids can also take the information that they learn from the Water Festival and bring it back to their families. As water stewards, kids can grow as individuals and leaders within their own communities, she noted.

"Through the waterheroes.ca website, students can continue their water stewardship journey. Flowing from the Festival, until the end of April, they, as well as families, friends and classmates they share their learning with, can enter the Big Splash contest by sending in water-friendly actions they pledge to do in the year ahead. Donated prizes will be awarded to individuals, classes and schools making inspiring positive impacts on local water systems through their 'Water Hero' actions," said Mitchell.

Student volunteers apply their studies leading our "Beaver Feaver" activity centre exploring unique adaptations of the North American Beaver to their aquatic environments and the interdependence within them through the use of metaphors and props. /Submitted

Mitchell says that seeing so many kids at the Water Festival gives her hope for the future. It is inspiring to see kids so excited to learn about water and the world around them and to take that information and spread the word about the importance of water and conservation. It helps ease the anxieties associated with climate change.

Recently, the Water Festival has had initiatives to bring smaller scale water festivals to communities in Ontario. Recently, the Water Festival brought volunteers and activities to Kennisis Lake by the Kennisis Lake Property Owners' Association.

The Water Festival continues to inspire children that visited since its conception in 2005. Mitchell says that one participant to the first Water Festivals has gone on to do research in Environmental Science and has returned to volunteer with the festival herself. Another student volunteer from Trent University became infatuated with Haliburton County and went on to study the lakes in the Haliburton Highlands and seek employment in the area.

This year, FEEL will be running a native plant sale and have gift cards available for purchase. Check back in through their website ecoenvirolearn.org.

"We can only exist because of our generous donors," said Mitchell. The Water Festival and FEEL are supported through sponsors including the Ontario Trillium Foundation, OPG and the Ontario Wildlife Federation and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

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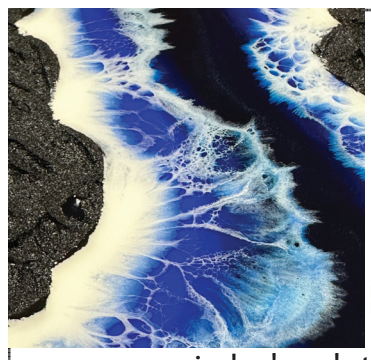
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Home is where the art is; fundraiser set to feature local artists

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

The Ethel Curry painting that has been donated by Don and Sheila Popple for the upcoming Art Extravaganza. Despite being painted in 1932, the treeline of the highlands is still recognizable. /Submitted

It's an art auction with Haliburton written all over it.

Quite literally.

The Haliburton Highlands Arts Extravaganza is set for Oct. 19 at Sir Sam's Ski Chalet, and what started as a small idea has snowballed into an event featuring local artists, live music, auctions, and delicious food.

The fundraiser is designed to support the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation, with proceeds going directly towards digital imaging equipment for the Haliburton Hospital. "We've noticed that everyone has been so supportive for the cause," said Chris Bishop, one of the organizers behind the event. "Local businesses have been very, very gracious with their donations."

Bishop was approached to assist in facilitating the event a few months ago, and he noted that while he had been to events like this in the past, he had never coordinated one himself.

This led to him trying to think outside the box, and come up with a unique approach to the event that would appeal to people of all ages.

And with that mind-set, he realized that the one thing both locals and visitors alike have in common, is a love for the Haliburton Highlands.

Bishop attended Humber College for photography, and in 1988, came up with the idea of making a coffee table book that would feature "the best of the best" of the Highlands.

"The whole idea was to put Haliburton on the map," he said. "I really wanted to find a way to help represent Haliburton."

While he was gung ho about the idea, he soon realized that the books would cost a significant amount to print. This was when he called on the business community for support. "So many businesses chipped in," he shared, noting that the book was a success and quite popular upon printing. "So I wanted to do something to thank all the businesses that helped me out."

Bishop came up with the idea of gifting local businesses the Haliburton book, with custom wildlife study sketches etched into the front pages by local acclaimed artist David Alexander Risk.

While the book has been out for 36 years now, Bishop believed he could continue to build on the success and interest in local artists. This was how he came up with the idea of inviting ten new artists to fill the pages of his book as a part of the fundraiser initiative.

With art at the forefront of the event, Bishop was also approached by Don and Sheila Popple, who were related to the well known artist Ethel Curry. The Popples graciously added to the cause by donating an original Ethel Curry painting, titled "Brick House on Highland Street," from the year 1932. The painting is a snapshot of life in downtown Haliburton, during a snowy winter day in the 1930s. It's not only a painting; it's a piece of history. The painting will be available via auction at the event, and via online auction leading up to the date.

Bishop noted that the fundraiser will be business casual, and all are welcome to attend to support the cause. Tickets are available online, and can be purchased by visiting www.hhhs.ca/foundation. The event runs on Oct. 19 from 6 until 9 p.m.

"It started as something very small and simple," Bishop said, "and it's really turned into a full arts extravaganza."

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Fleming CREW Fall Job and Volunteer Fair

Date: Thursday, Oct. 17
Time: 3 to 7 p.m.
Location: Royal Canadian Legion (719 Mountain St., Haliburton)
Cost: FREE
Discover new opportunities at the Fall Job and Volunteer Fair hosted by Fleming CREW Employment Centre and County of Haliburton! Explore career options, transition to a new field, re-enter the workforce, or gain experience as a volunteer. If you're an employer, meet great local talent. More details at www.flemingcrew.ca/jobfair.

Recurring Events

Creative Collaborations

When: Tuesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church. 617 Mountain Street
Join us for the Creative Collaborations craft group. Share your skills. Learn new skills. Bring your own project or work on the featured project. Tuesdays at 1 pm at St. George's Anglican Church. Beginners Welcome. Contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for details.

Lakeside Church Service

When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome here.

Seniors Chair Exercises

When: Thursdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Please join us for safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Weekly Meat Rolls

When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 & 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw at the Coboconk Legion. 5 spins for $10. The first 4 rounds are for highest and lowest score with 2 winners per round. The last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call (705) 454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly

When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129,
Admission: Yearly membership of $59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

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Get your tickets to see the colours

Tickets to see the fall foliage at the Dorset Scenic Lookout Tower are now available for purchase.

Thousands of visitors come to the Tower each autumn to take in the spectacular colours, and timed, advance tickets allow the Township to safely manage these large crowds. Advance tickets will be required now through Thanksgiving. New this year, advance tickets will be required for all visits, on weekdays and weekends, during this time period.

You can purchase your advance tickets on the Algonquin Highlands Trails website.

Submitted

The view from the Dorset Tower attracts thousands each year, and while colours are at their peak, advanced tickets are required. /Photo submitted

Art and soul

April Gates of Blackbird Pottery showcases her works of art during the annual Studio Tour over the weekend. The Studio Tour continues over the Thanksgiving weekend. /TIM YANO Staff photographer

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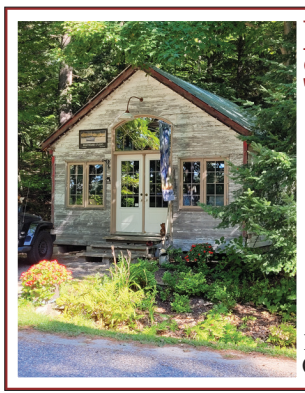

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HCDC AGM highlights community growth

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

A meeting with some hellos and some goodbyes. Haliburton County Development Corporation's (HCDC) annual general meeting was held on Oct. 4 at the still shiny Link building off County Road 21.

Following a land acknowledgement, Warden Liz Danielsen kicked off the meeting, bringing greetings from county council members. "What you have done for our economy," said Danielsen, referencing the hard work of staff and board members of HCDC, "is something that should definitely be applauded."

To dive right into numbers, Tim Degeer of Dawson Gray provided news of a clean audit, and once again gave credit to Patti Tallman, the executive director of HCDC, and the team of staff who keep the numbers running smoothly.

Tallman, who was present via zoom due to COVID-19 exposure, presented on this past year's statistics, with 121 businesses assisted and in-depth counselling services offered, 90 referrals, and 309 jobs created/maintained through HCDC support. "Collaboration is key," said Tallman. "I'd like to acknowledge the hard work of the staff. I'm really blessed to have the best team."

Sara Joanu, the loans officer, followed Tallman for a progress report. She noted that over the past year, HCDC received 73 loan applications, where 53 were approved, 13 were withdrawn, and seven were declined.

Noting that the numbers are up to a year end of March 31, 2024, Joanu shared that the total dollars dispersed within the community were $6,559,589 at an average interest rate of 8.2 per cent, and a total value of investment portfolio landing at $22,536,548. "I am confident in our ability to make a positive difference in Haliburton County," she said.

The loans were split up by sector for those to see, with the service sector comprising the largest piece of the pie at 49.4 per cent. These services include restaurants, landscaping, hair salons, accounting, and auto repair.

Other loan sectors from HCDC include construction, making up 12.6 per cent of their portfolio, tourism at 13.1 per cent, manufacturing at 8.4 per cent, retail at 8.1 per cent, forestry at 5.8 per cent, and not for profits holding 2.6 per cent of the portfolio.

Out of the 73 loans from the past fiscal year, 44.1 per cent went into maintenance, 29.4 per cent into expansion, and 26.5 into start up costs.

The interest from the loans given out into the community is used to directly fund community economic development (CED) initiatives from HCDC, and Elisha Barlowe, the programs and operations coordinator for HCDC, dove into the many CED programs HCDC oversaw this past year.

With $233,000 funds leveraged, the CED department of HCDC developed six strategic plans, involved 29 community partners, and recruited 79 volunteers.

Many have heard of the local initiatives program, or LIP, which, based on interest levels from community loans, had an impact of $174,973 this past year. This equated to 25 projects, 30 partners, $70,000 dispersed, $104,973 in leveraged funds, and $104,009 in-kind contributions.

While the numbers were delivered and the team applauded for another successful year, it was time to say goodbye to one of HCDC's longest serving directors.

Barb Bolin joined the corporation in 1995 as a member of the CED committee. "Her passion for community economic development has played a vital role in many of our achievements in the area," said Cory Abbs, the loan administrator for HCDC. Bolin has been the chair for both the CED committee, as well as the investment committee at different times, and worked tirelessly to provide funding and relief for countless local businesses. "Barb's unwavering dedication to both our community and the corporation will be remembered for years to come," said Abbs.

Bolin's role will be filled by Nancy Wright-Laking, which was approved by the board of directors at the meeting.

The AGM was closed off by Warden Liz Danielsen, who used her closing remarks as an opportunity to shed some light on recent developments from county council; namely, the recently adopted municipal accommodation tax (MAT). This tax is associated with short term rentals, and is split equally between the county and the lower tiers. The county uses their percentage for any upcoming tourism initiative, and each municipality can use their allocation as they see fit. "The bylaws have all been passed and are in place," said Danielsen.

The warden was asked whether the taxes will impact the overall tourism budget, to which she replied "that's not the plan," noting she sees the MAT as an opportunity to improve county tourism initiatives overall.

Considering the tax is a newly proposed regulation, Danielsen could not speak to the exact amount that would be received year over year.

Danielsen also used her time at the podium to skim the surface of the mighty conversation that is amalgamation, or, as Danielsen phrased it, "the A-word".

Amalgamation has been a hot topic for countless years; with a teetering back and forth between those for and against the amalgamation of upper and lower tier government models. In an attempt to gain some clarity, county council recently completed a service delivery review; a glimpse into which services lie where, and who holds the onus.

Danielsen reported that the review, which is available online for public viewing, was quite simply, too much. "We aren't all on the same page," she said. "It's overwhelming."

She believes that streamlining these services, for now, is too big a task to take on. "Right now, there are lakes that have different rules from one end to the other," she said. "We need to make sure everyone in the county knows the rules, and I think we can do that without the 'A-word'."

That being said, Danielsen confirmed that she is committed to continuing to have the conversations around amalgamation. "I will encourage open discussions and a willingness to all move in the same direction," she said.

Heat Bank seeks support in wake of overwhelming calls

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

Volunteers chop wood to supply the heat bank for the winter. /FILE

"It has been overwhelming. Absolutely overwhelming," says Tina Jackson, executive director of the Central Food Network.

This September, the Heat Bank has received a record number of calls asking for support. Last September, only seven households contacted the Heat Bank. This September, that number has increased to 20.

The Heat Bank is an initiative under the Central Food Network. They respond to calls from people requesting support in heating their homes, assisting with stopping hydro companies shutting off power, energy access to fuel and firewood, and access to legal support.

The Heat Bank is an authorized intake agency for government programs including the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) and the Low Income Energy Program (LEEP).

Jackson thinks that the ever-increasing cost of food and fuel has resulted in more families reaching out for help.

Customers are not allowed to have their hydro cut off after November. For customers that have already had their hydro cut off, the companies have until Dec. 1 to put their hydro back on to allow them to survive the winter. Before a house's hydro is connected, the hydro company will try to negotiate a repayment plan. If that does not work, the hydro company will begin to call. It is only after months of attempting to reach a repayment plan and contacting customers that do not pay, that they will cut off the hydro. There are special rules for low income customers.

In the spring of this year, the threshold for hydro assistance programs changed. Due to this change, Jackson says that it has caused people to lose hydro to their homes at a more accelerated rate than in previous years.

Living in urban centers in Ontario, you have gas lines that are also protected and cannot be cut off in November. Living in Haliburton County has the disadvantage of relying on oil, firewood, and other methods of heating people's houses and are not protected by the government.

Needs are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Low income is verified by the Heat Bank and they have professionals who can decide what services are best to assist you. They also offer rebates on home refurbishes and heat insulating.

"It is very hard. It depends on what each household is going through," says Jackson.

The Heat Bank is capable of temporarily navigating households away from an emergency and assisting them in making a plan and supporting people through the process.

On Nov. 10, the Rhubarb is hosting their annual fundraiser for the Heat Bank. This fundraiser is a wonderful opportunity to help the Heat Bank and eat some delicious food. In addition to this fundraiser, the Heat Bank has an online auction. They are also looking for volunteers interested in chopping and delivering firewood in the county.

"Our services are entirely confidential," says Jackson. "Everybody needs help in their lives. There is no shame in reaching out and searching for help."

For those in need of emergency assistance, would like to volunteer, or donate, please contact the Heat Bank's hotline at 705-306-0565.

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Fall fun

The annual Abbey Gardens Fall Festival was held on Oct. 5, and included tractor rides, games for kids, sweet treats, and some special visits to the pumpkin patch. /TIM YANO staff photographer

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Classic rides, vintage vibes

Volunteers were busy at the registration table for the annual Rat Rod Ruckus, Patinas's and Classics Car Show held at Ward Park in Norland last Saturday, Oct. 5. Over 300 vehicles attended, with 251 registered for the show. Admission was free with a food bank donation, with all proceeds going to the Kinmount and area food bank. A craft and vendor market also took place in the recreation centre. /KAREN LONDON Staff

Southbound traffic on Highway 35 waited on the should to enter Ward Park in Norland as traffic flowed in. Car and truck enthusiasts travelled from as far as Manitoulin Island.

Helpful hands gave this Rat Rod a strong push for a jump start to get into the field.

A 1950 Chevrolet 3100 owned by Keith Thomas of Carnarvon.

A picture perfect show day to relax and take in the scenery.

Firefighters from Norland Station 17, City of Kawartha Lakes, spent the day barbecuing for the event.

Organizer Rick Stewart thanked the crowd and announced the winners of each class, by decade and overall favourite cars and trucks. This year the 1950s class award was named the John “Shooter” Schut memorial. The winner of the 50/50 took home $922 back to Manitoulin Island, while the other half will be donated to the Kinmount and Area Food Bank. A fundraiser was also held to raise money for Ridgewood Public School's new playground equipment. /KAREN LONDON Staff

Chip Barry, left, of Minden took home first place in the Patina class with his 1957 Chevrolet 3100 pickup pictured above.

Thirty-five years of SIRCH

by EMILY STONEHOUSE
Tines Staff

With sparklers on a glossy cake and shimmering balloons in the background, Gena Roberston, the executive director of SIRCH, officially celebrated 35 years of giving back to the community with SIRCH. "35 years ago, I was the only employee in a tiny little office building," she reminisced. "But it's really a team effort. It's a huge collective effort, and Haliburton County is one of the best places to make those connections."

In 1989, the Supportive Initiative for Residents in the County of Haliburton, now commonly known as SIRCH, became incorporated. Their first program was the Parent Support Services Program, designed to offer mental health services and support to parents with children up to 18 years old. "We had started with a social action committee in the area," said Robertson, "and that was about what was needed in the county. The mandate really has always been to look at where the gaps are."

Robertson noted that while it's important to face forward and look at the future of SIRCH, sometimes looking back serves an important purpose as well.

see FILLING page 17

Gena Robertson, the founder and executive director of SIRCH, cuts the cake to celebrate 35 years of SIRCH in the Haliburton Highlands on Oct. 1. /EMILY STONEHOUSE Staff

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		4		6	3			
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			8				7	4
		5		3				

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Answers on page 19

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Filling gaps wherever needed

from page 16

"We brought in adult mental health services, community hospice, victim support services, a lot of things," she said.

Many of these programs have since been divested to Haliburton Highlands Health Services, or other community partners to take the lead, leaving room for SIRCH to move onto the next gap that needs to be filled.

Some of their other programs include but are not limited to: a women's emergency house to escape domestic violence, pregnancy support programs, nutrition and food security initiatives, bereavement groups, and employment training to name a few.

One of the programs that Robertson is most proud of is the School's Cool program, which she describes as "leveling the playing field" for kids approaching school age. "If you enter kindergarten and you are significantly behind, it's been proven that your trajectory is always going to be behind," she noted.

The program is able to prepare kids - in both an academic and social manner - for their upcoming school experience, in just a matter of weeks.

The need for the program became apparent as kids continued to grow and thrive, and before long, SIRCH was offering training at schools not only across the local county, but across the country, to ensure that all kids had a fair chance at starting out.

Robertson came up with the idea for School's Cool from her own upbringing here in Haliburton County. She recalled that when she was young, growing up in a rural community without access to transportation could be isolating, making the transition to school even more difficult.

> "We don't do this by ourselves, we always do this with partners. Donors, volunteers, local businesses, or other service clubs. It really speaks to the community we have here."
>
> — GENA ROBERTSON, SIRCH FOUNDER

After calling Haliburton County home for many years, Robertson moved out west, where she was "bitten by the community development bug," she said. She settled in a series of small communities across the country, where she offered support services to the rural populations, before returning to Haliburton as an adult.

Upon her arrival back in the community, she took on a position with Children's Aid Services (CAS), and was the only worker for the organization in the county. "I always said I'd never stay at a job for longer than five years, though," she laughed, as she cut the cake celebrating 35 years with SIRCH.

While Robertson started SIRCH in October 1989 and has been guiding the ship for years, she noted that there are many who make it run smoothly, Over the past 35 years, SIRCH has employed over 300 staff, and even more volunteers. "We don't do this by ourselves," said Robertson. "We always do this with partners. Donors, volunteers, local businesses, or other service clubs. It really speaks to the community we have here."

Over the past ten years, SIRCH has received 5.8 million worth of in-kind donations; including goods, services, time, and expertise. "This is an incredibly generous community,' said Robertson.

While community support and funding has been welcome, Robertson noted that there were many times over the years that SIRCH needed to get "innovative" when it came to raising funds. "Sometimes there was funding available, and sometimes there wasn't. That's when we got into social enterprise."

SIRCH works in collaboration with the Thrift Warehouse, located at Mallard Road in Haliburton. This booming business is well known to both locals and visitors alike, and has a steady stream of changing items that keeps interest piqued year-round. A portion of the proceeds from the warehouse are donated directly back to SIRCH and their programming. "When people shop at the Warehouse, it impacts us directly," said Robertson. "Every little bit helps."

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Junior basketball

Haliburton Highlands Red Hawks faced off against Kenner this past week, with the juniors coming out on top with a score of 87-14 /TIM YANO Staff photographer

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Senior basketball

The senior Red Hawks also faced the Kenner Collegiate Vocational Institute from Peterborough, but fell 52-18. /TIM YANO Staff photographer

Township of Algonquin Highlands

PUBLIC MEETING
Proposed Change of Building Permit Fees

TAKE NOTICE pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Ontario Building Code Act, 1992 empowers Council to pass certain by-laws respecting construction, demolition, change of use, permits, fees and inspections.

Pursuant to Section 7(6) of the Ontario Building Code Act, 1992, The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands will be holding a **Public Meeting on November 7, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.** in the Council Chambers at 1123 North Shore Road, Algonquin Highlands, Ontario, to consider fee changes to the Building Fees. Information will be provided at the meeting on the estimated costs of enforcing and administering the Building Code Act, the amount of the proposed fee(s) and the rationale for changing and/or imposing fees.

AND PERSON may attend the meeting, and/or submit in writing, in support of or objection to the proposed fees setting out the objection to the By-law and the reasons of the objection.

Additional information relating to proposed fee changes is available by contacting the **Greg Moore, CBO during regular offices hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) at 705-489-2379 ext. 330 or emailing gmoore@algonquinhighlands.ca**

Dated this 9th day of October, 2024.

Dawn Newhook, Clerk/Deputy CAO
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, Ontario K0M 1S0
Tel: (705) 489-2379 ext. 333
dnewhook@algonquinhighlands.ca
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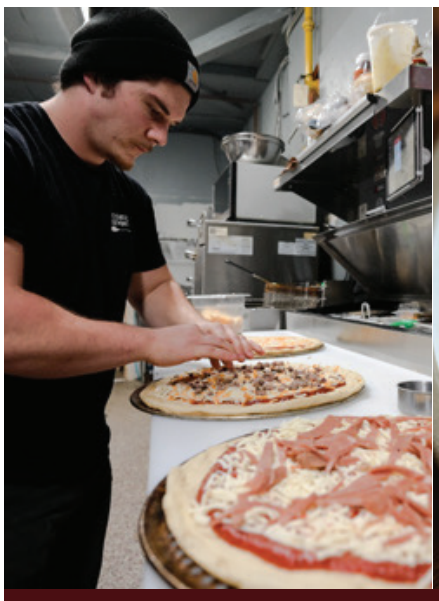

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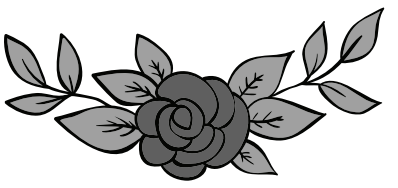

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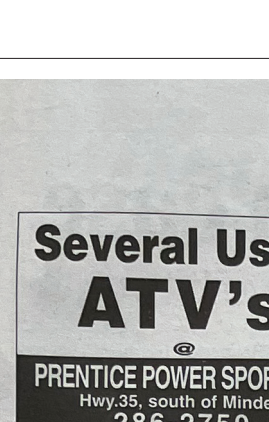
LOOK INSIDE

Mayhem on ice

Women's hockey proving to be a popular sport in Minden these days

See page 10



Down at the dump

Dave Robertson turned the Maple Lake dump into a fascinating spectacle of eclectic found art

See page 21

In Quotes

"Do we have any lakes left?"

Algonquin Highlands reeve Eleanor Harrison

911 hits snag as signs not staying in place

by SHERYL LOUCKS
Times staff

The 911 project hit a serious snag when problems surfaced with the way signs were installed on 180 roads or a tenth of Haliburton County's roads.

Stephen Foster, 911 project co-ordinator, reported to county council last week that 911 hit "a patch of rough water" with the installation of the signs. He says the field co-ordinator for the installation of the signs was also one of the working members of one of the crews so was not able to get around constantly to check on the signs that were installed.

The company, Foster says, has taken action to rectify the problem of 1,500 signs not being put into the ground deep enough, tilting and leaning over. Foster explained there is a contractor with the project who is responsible for over-seeing that the installation is done correctly. Jim McMahon, Minden Hills deputy-reeve, said he could not understand why the county had to pay for someone "to baby-sit a firm we hired to do a job for us."

Warden Ross Rigney responded the county had agreed in the original project to hire this individual for that purpose and this was not a surprise. Dysart Reeve Murray Fearrey said he was just glad they found the problem now before the company installing the signs was paid and left the county.

Foster told council his staff members are continuing to go through the manifests for each road, which says how many signs were installed to see if there are any more prob-

see DISPATCH page 2

Darren Lum/TIMES

Jack-o-lantern in the making:
Tina Anderson, an Ontario early years teacher, helps Colby Bennett get a pumpkin ready for carving last Thursday at the Early Years Centre in Minden. The big night is this Friday.

Hodgson named 'Highlander'

Former MPP lauded for his service to the area

by MATTHEW WALLS
Times staff

With his retirement from politics less than a month old, former MPP Chris Hodgson is already reaping the goodwill he accumulated in his eight years serving the county at Queen's Park.

On Friday, the Chamber of Commerce, to a standing ovation, named Hodgson Highlander of the Year at its Annual General Meeting at Camp Wanakita.

Before receiving the award, Hodgson was given a 'toast-roast,' a mocking appreciation by five friends and co-workers.

Ted Brandon, Hodgson's press agent from 1993 to

see HODGSON page 3

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